/185 cont./ In any
844 case, the birth, which is always regarded as very dangerous, takes
[343] place there. As a matter of principle, a midwife (ndõsoknãs) is
fetched. The latter, as the name implies, is not a shaman. She
● [759] has nothing to do with shamanistic functions, but is qualified only
for births or external injuries, such as broken bones or flesh wounds.

The midwife may not be an old woman. She is fetched before the birth by the husband of the pregnant woman and always comes. Several times I asked whether in an emergency a man or the mother could help, but it was always said that the midwife
[465] always comes, no matter how busy she is. For her assistance she receives only her meals, unless complications arise. In this case she receives wool or natural produce as remuneration for her help.

In principle, only the midwife and the woman in labor are in the dũyat. The latter is in a squatting position. With her hands she holds onto a belt that is slung around the roof beam of the dũyat. If there is no belt, the husband may also be present, and he then embraces his wife from behind and holds her in such a way that she is likewise in a squatting position. The midwife
845 receives the child. If its position is not normal, for example, in
844 case of a breech position of the child, she turns the child so that the head lies downward. If the child is still not born, the mother must die -- as was explained to us -- for then nothing further can be done. This only rarely happens, however.

844 The midwife brings along her medicinal herbs, with which she rubs the body of the woman in labor. The newborn child is first washed with cold water and then wrapped in a piece of ruana
[412] and given to the mother. The severing of the umbilical cord is not done with the knife or the scissors, but rather, after the umbili-
[824] cal cord (kolwát) is tied beforehand with a homespun wool thread, with the sharp-edged cane of a type of reed. The father may see his child immediately after birth; the mother, however, stays with the child approximately two weeks longer in the dũyat. The afterbirth (duyáha), together with the umbilical cord, is buried near the menstruation house. The father digs the hole for this
[856] purpose, and the mother throws both into it. The hole must not be too shallow, for otherwise the dogs would dig them out, but not too deep either, for then the child would not get its teeth until very late and only with great difficulty.